

II. Remarks

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully requested.

Claims 5-6, 8-9, and 11-14 are pending in the application. Claim 13 is independent.

Claim 12 was inadvertently omitted from the October 14, 2003 Amendment. It is being submitted herewith.

Applicants have added new Claims 13-14 to afford themselves a scope of protection commensurate with the disclosure. The new claims are fully supported in the specification, and are believed to be allowable for the reasons to be developed below.

Claims 1-12 were rejected as being unpatentable over Spurr and Harrison, for the reasons discussed on pages 3-4 of the Office Action. Applicants respectfully traverse all art rejections.

Applicants respectfully submits that neither Spurr nor Harrison teach the novel and non-obvious combination of features recited in each claim of the subject application. At least two claimed features are nowhere disclosed or suggested in the cited art. The subject claims recite an apparatus that includes first and second connecting bars that are "connected to an inner slide of a slide pair" and are also connected to third and fourth connecting bars, respectively, through a transmission means. The third and

fourth connecting bars are connected to outer slides of respective slide pairs. The first and second connecting bars move towards the centerline of the mold face when opening the slide pairs. This provides a structure that is very compact.

The claims additionally recite a single actuator for driving a single connecting bar in each pair of connecting bars. The driven connecting bars on opposite sides of the mold centerline are driven in opposite directions. This feature also enables the stripper assembly to be more compact. With this configuration, the size of the actuator can be reduced and may be located near the centerline of the mold without interference with the mold closing and clamping apparatus.

Neither Spurr alone or in combination with Harrison teaches an apparatus having the combination of features recited in the claims, and in particular those features discussed above.

More particularly, new Claim 13 recites a combination of features including structure having slide pairs arranged about a centerline and "an actuator operatively coupled --- to first and second connecting bars" and "a first transmission means" and "a second transmission means" for transferring movement of one connecting bar to opposite movement of a connected connecting bar. This duality of operation is neither disclosed nor suggested in

either Spurr or Harrison.

Spurr shows, in Figure 4 thereof, a rack and pinion mechanism for a parison take-out gripper. In this arrangement, actuator members 203 and 205 are driven in opposite directions by the air cylinders 232 and 234 to drive the members in opposite directions. This requires a separate drive means for each row of parisons. To avoid interference with the operation of the mold requires that this drive mechanism be located at an extremity of the gripper bars.

In contrast, according to the subject claims, the actuator may be located centrally of the mold since it merely has to drive one of the connecting bars of each pair since an associated connecting bar responds to movement of the driven connecting bar.

Figure 15 of Spurr shows a single drive mechanism for a transfer mechanism for positioning parisons for delivery to a blow mold. While this arrangement may be useful for positioning parisons in preparation for receipt in a blow mold, it would be quite unsatisfactory for use in stripping parts from a mold. First, each pair of gripper bars requires a separate drive mechanism, such as the shown air cylinders. This creates space requirements that are just not available when retrieving parts from a mold. Second, each drive mechanism must be attached to an extremity of one of the gripper bars. In a mold stripper device, this would

use up valuable real estate that might be more usefully employed to accommodate mold closing and clamping devices.

Claim 13 better emphasizes the above-described differences by reciting a structure that includes at least two parallel slide pairs arranged about a centerline of a mold face and having a single actuator for driving both slide pairs. In this arrangement, at least four separate connecting bars are required. Spurr does not describe a device capable of using a single actuator for multiple take-out grippers. As shown in Figure 3 of Spurr, each set of gripper jaws requires a separate air cylinder 232 or 234 moving actuator members 203 and 205 in conjunction with rack and pinion 231. This arrangement clearly cannot provide the benefits of the compact structure created by the present invention that requires only a single actuator to open and close multiple sets of slide pairs. Further, the embodiment shown in Figure 15 of Spurr fails to disclose or suggest a compact structure using such an arrangement. As shown in Figure 15, each set of gripper bars requires a separate actuator. The subject claims eliminate the need for separate actuators and provide a single actuator to move multiple sets of connecting bars and connected slide pairs.

Harrison has been cited for teaching cam tracks (42) that are used for defining a prerelease position for the slides (25, 26) and the cam tracks having a cam insert (53)

and cam followers (41). Harrison has been cited to show that it would be obvious to use the teachings of a cam in Harrison to modify the structure described in Spurr. In view of the comments hereinbefore, whether or not such a combination is possible is moot since Spurr clearly fails to teach the invention now claimed in claim 11. Note that the claims have been amended for clarity with respect to the specification and Drawings, and not in response to any statutory requirement.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that this application is now in condition for allowance, and a Notice thereof is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 625-3507. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,


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